

## **FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** December 5, 2018

**Agenda Item:** Mt. Haggin Wildlife Management Area Addition (R3)

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** FWP proposes to purchase in fee-title a 161-acre (approx.) parcel adjacent to Mt. Haggin Wildlife Management Area, which would be managed as part of the WMA. The property offers many strategic qualities:

- It borders the WMA on three sides.
- It includes two mesic meadows and the headwaters of Oregon Creek.
- Located just below the Continental Divide, it's part of the migration pathway for elk and mule deer and provides elk calving habitat and summer range.
- It is adjacent to the Sugarloaf Lodge property (~150 ac.), which is currently for sale, making this property more at risk for development, especially with the Mt. Haggin WMA cross-country ski trails directly across the road.
- It would increase public access for hunting, angling, trapping, wildlife watching, and other recreational opportunities.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has had preliminary conversations with FWP on this proposal and may assist with this project if endorsed by the commission.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Upon endorsement by the commission, an appraisal valuation and other due diligence investigations would be conducted, along with an environmental analysis and a public review period.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

The available alternatives are to purchase or forgo purchase of the property. The property is strategically located adjacent to Mt. Haggin WMA. Depending on future uses of the property, such as development, there is the potential for conflicts with wildlife habitats, hunting, and other forms of public recreation on the WMA.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends the commission endorse this proposal. An endorsement would allow the department to conduct additional work for assessing the viability of this proposal.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the commission endorse this addition to Mt. Haggin WMA, allowing FWP to proceed further with negotiations, evaluation, and public review.